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## ABSTRACT

This publication includes five papers that were presented at a language communications conference that emphasized integrating the language arts at elementary and secondary school levels. Walter Loban stresses the importance of classroom language activities that involve children in genuine purposes and that link language to thinking. Charles R. Cooper argues that, when teachers teach writing, they should spend most of their time conferring with individual students about their writing and that they should train students to talk to each other in helpful ways about their writing. Dorothy S. Strickland discusses the importance of oral language in children's schooling and stresses the need for a well-planned oral language curriculum. Alan C. Purves examines skills needed for producing and receiving language and proposes a set of goals for teaching students to achieve language mastery. Delores Minor points out the need for teachers to go beyond teaching the basics to include humanism in education. (GW)

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# Survival Through Language: The Basics and Beyond

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 29th  
LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIONS  
CONFERENCE, 1976

EDITED BY  
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## INTRODUCTION

The following papers were presented at the 29th Language Communications Conference at the University of Pittsburgh. Educators attending the conference heard nationally recognized professionals speaking on language development, reading, and writing. Presentations ranged from reports of recently completed research to newly tested classroom practices.

The conference focused on survival through language with emphasis on the integration of the language arts at both elementary and secondary school levels. The *Proceedings* represent a profile of current thinking and practices in the language arts. Readers will find insightful statements in the papers on research and theory along with specific suggestions for the teaching of reading and writing.

The Faculty in Language Communications at the University of Pittsburgh is committed to the integration of the language arts in both theory and practice. We present these papers in the spirit of that commitment.

Anthony Petrosky

# Survival Through Language

**WALTER LOBAN**

**University of California at Berkeley**

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Language learning is very different from learning anything else in the curriculum. All other disciplines—history, science, home economics, math—whatever I might choose differ from the learning of language. Language is an internal phenomenon; other subjects are external and must be brought to the learner. All the subjects are valuable, and I am not in any way decrying their importance. But “Fish gotta swim, birds gotta fly” and “People gotta talk.” We have to use language.

The important feature of language, of all symbol making systems, is that the way to learn them is the way the small child learns them before he comes to school—through using them for real purposes. If people are to gain power and efficiency and effectiveness with reading and listening, writing and speaking, these ways of language must be used rather than merely studied. Language is within us. Before they start school children have already learned it through an engagement of their minds with communication, with necessity of speaking. In education what is genuinely important is to manipulate language, to use it and to use it in genuine situations where the learner has something to say; someone she or he very much desires to say it to, a deep desire to reach someone with it. A parallel but opposite attitude is true of reading or listening where one must want very much to understand what is read or heard.

It is this interaction of our minds with language which will contribute to the survival of individuals and their societies. The mind must be engaged. It must not be merely going through unmotivated motions. Perhaps the best analogy that I can offer is one from my own experience. My mother, toward the end of her life, had a serious stroke and was hospitalized for a long time. When she came home from the hospital her whole left-hand side was incapacitated. Some good kind-hearted

friends brought her a rubber ball and said, "Now, Hannah, sit there and keep squeezing that ball." She did for a day or so until her doctor came. Her doctor brought with him an eminent neurologist. When the neurologist saw the rubber ball he said, "Now that will do you no harm but it will certainly do you very little good. You must use your muscles for genuine functions." He wanted her to begin washing and drying the dishes again. He turned to me and said, "Get Melmac; they won't break when she drops them. Don't give her delicate china. Have her pick up whatever she drops. Then he said, "What else do you like to do?" My mother came from a large family in which she was the child who specialized in sewing. Other girls did the cooking. My mother despised cooking. She told the neurologist, "I liked to sew but I can't now." He said, "Oh yes you can. Where is her sewing basket?" In it he found some big needles and he said, "You must try. You must hold with the left hand and sew with the right hand." By washing the dishes and sewing, then gradually adding more complicated and refined actions, my mother's mind became engaged with her muscles. Soon she was using her left side again, and eventually, relaxed and confident, she flew about the country by herself—visiting her grandchildren in St. Paul, even traveling to Europe. All her controls came back to her. That neurologist was right!

Can we apply analogy? The mind must see some purpose in what it is doing and it must be motivated and it must care. There must be language activities that are genuine. The reader must want very much to find out what is on that page and to understand it. The writer must have a genuine audience whom he or she wishes very much to reach. The same is true of listening. In every one of the language arts the mind must be engaged in a functional, genuine situation. This is the way a pupil improves in the language arts—not through learning *about* them, but by manipulating them, by using them.

I very much like the language experience approach as a method for small children to begin their reading. Children who come from silk stocking districts and academic homes can move on more quickly to other approaches, but even they should begin with the language experience approach. Children who come from homes where the parents lack education and where there are no books need a longer period of time with the language experience approach. In this functional beginning of reading, the pupils learn that what is in their minds can be uttered on their slippery little tongues and can also be captured in these funny hieroglyphics and can be read back. The language experience approach never really has taken solid hold in American education. I

attribute that to the fact that it is a relatively complex approach; it requires devoted teachers willing to invest time and effort.

All such approaches link language to thinking. What is thinking? We know it as an activity of the nervous system, particularly of the higher brain centers, but this is not very helpful. We may get further, perhaps, by asking why human beings think. Although not the whole explanation, adjustment of the individual for the sake of survival must be considered one dominant function of thought. By thinking, individuals adjust to their environment, both external and internal; thinking is, at its foundations, essential to human life. Thinking enables man to identify objects and ideas and to reduce the complexity of the environment. Thinking alleviates the necessity of constant relearning—presumably to conserve energy needed for higher levels of existing—and enables the thinker to estimate in advance appropriate and inappropriate actions. This future-oriented aspect of thinking allows the individual an opportunity for prior adjustment. Thinking helps him know what events and ideas are worth his attention and, lest he break down in confusion, what may safely be ignored. Thus thinking becomes a means of maintaining equilibrium. Yet this cannot be a static equilibrium: growth and change are also part of existence, and curiosity, inseparable from thinking, prevents us from adjusting too well.

Language is not essential to thought. Thinking can be done without verbal symbol—witness Helen Keller before she learned to use words. But language makes possible infinitely more precise and rapid thinking. One way to see the relationship between thinking and language is to study man's capacity for making distinctions. Poison oak differs from maple leaves; proteins offer some advantages over animal fats. Making and using classifications is an important aspect of thinking, and language enables us to maintain our classifications against the confusion and flux of living.

According to John Dewey (1909, p. 232), language, although it is not thought, is necessary for any high development of thought and communication. Dewey sees words as fences that select and detach meanings from what would otherwise be a vague blur, as labels that retain and store meanings, and as vehicles for transfer and reapplication to new situations. Words have another important aspect; they are organizational instruments as well. Not just indicative of a single meaning, words "also form sentences in which meanings are organized in relation to one another."

But thinking is more than the means by which the individual adjusts in order to survive. The speed and competence of language make

possible such a fine state of equilibrium that human energies need not be entirely consumed in charting a mid-passage between breakdown and stagnation. It is this freedom from animal struggle for survival, this extra dividend of release, that counts most heavily in teaching children and adolescents to use language with power. Thinking becomes reason, to which Alfred North Whitehead (1958, p. 8) assigns a function: the art of life—to live, to live well, and to live better. Through the arts of language pupils assume their heritage as human beings. They can make choices among ethical and esthetic values; they can weigh and consider, sifting truth from falseness; they can help to organize society on a foundation of wisdom rather than on one of blind authority, class and raw power.

When we put together all our best thinking, insight, and research about language, the most important wisdom we gain may very well be concerned with the way in which the child persists in the direction of ordering the chaos that surrounds every human being. Why does the child create symbols? May it be that the human child must not, cannot, be at the mercy of the incessant, bewildering multiplicity of forces impinging upon him? Like adults, he cannot tolerate the vast buzzing confusion of the external world; he must screen and classify what he needs to know and respond to; he must blank out what is trivial, peripheral, irrelevant. So the child clarifies, surmounts, orders his emotions and concepts, and his human way of doing this is through symbols. Words, of course, will be tremendously useful, but so also are gestures, mimicry, dramatization, games, fantasy and dreams. If ever education understands how crucial all of these are to learners, even to adults, the humanities of music, literature, myth, folklore, painting, sculpturing, dancing, and drama will ascend to their central position alongside logic, reason, and problem solving. The cognitive and affective realms will be reconciled, will flow together like a swift and powerful river.

But not all children are fortunate. Not all children experience relationships with significant adults who appreciate them as human beings. Among the mental processes children need to develop fully are two more powerful ones (beyond generating symbols): imagining and judging. *Imagining* must be a guide, not a substitute for action, but it is through imagining that human beings discover what they want their lives to be, gain a vision beyond mere day-to-day survival. *Judgment* functions as a check upon the validity of imagination; judgment is also a guide to living. The people around a child must value symbolizing, imagination, and judgment, encouraging and supporting the child when

he uses these processes. Some parents and teachers do this instinctively. Many do not.

I realize that some wealthy homes are cold and some middle-class homes are stuffy or dull, but such disadvantages, harmful though they are, shrivel in comparison with real poverty passed on from generation to generation, "like mirror locked to mirror in an endless corridor of despair." In some poverty homes where there is still the will to survive, the child's world can be one of growth even though the parents do sometimes (in desperation) drink, fight, lash out at noisy children. Vitality is still there; it will transmit itself to the children.

The homes of poverty to which I direct your attention are rather those characterized by discouragement, defeat, and apathy. A numb, drifting, goal-less home devitalizes the child. It can happen to any family of any race; but it happens most frequently in this country to those who are minority groups or those living in isolated poverty areas. Social isolation or geographical isolation both bring problems. For all children, putting order and direction into experience through drama, fantasy, and words is crucial, but it is especially so for those from economically impoverished backgrounds where the parents have abandoned the warmth of family cohesiveness. Here is where school and teachers begin their efforts. The child's first experience with school is crucial. He must find support and success there.

In all that I have said, there emerges a deeper meaning for us as teachers. Just as involvement in genuine purpose is necessary for the learner, so too is it crucial for the teacher. We must not be squeezing rubber balls. Our own teaching must be something our minds cherish. We must care so deeply about teaching that it isn't work but pleasure instead. We must become fortune's favored children, those whose work is their pleasure, and whose pleasure it is to work. John Steinbeck had such a teacher. He wrote about her once, calling his essay "Like Captured Fireflies."

"In her class our speculation ranged the world. She breathed curiosity into us so that every morning we came to her class carrying new truths, new facts, new ideas cupped and shielded in our hand like captured fireflies. When she went away a sadness came over us, but the light did not go out. She left her signature upon us, the literature of the teacher who writes on children's minds. I have had many teachers who taught me soon forgotten things, but only a few like her who created in me a new thing, a new hunger, a new

attitude. I suppose that to a large extent I am the unsigned manuscript of that teacher, what deathless power lies in the hands of such a person."

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# Teaching Writing by Conferencing

CHARLES R. COOPER

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## Introduction

I want to make only two points in my presentation:

1. When we teach writing, we should spend most of our time talking to individual students about their writing.
2. We should train our students to talk to each other about their writing.

And I am making one assumption: what we and the students say about a piece of writing should be guided by the best current information on the composing process and written discourse.

I've posed these two points as questions I want to explore with you: Why should we talk personally to our students about their writing? How can we arrange to do that with classes as big as they are? Is it possible to train a student to respond helpfully to another student writer? How can new developments in research on composing inform our talk with student writers?

These are not new questions for the writing teacher. Faced with too many students and too little time to keep up with new developments, we might put them in the category of "nagging" questions. They won't go away. They keep reappearing when we look into *English Journal* or *College English*, when we talk to other writing teachers, or when we think about our own writing, if we write.

First of all, let me develop an argument for writing instruction as essentially a personal matter between a writer and a teacher. I will come out very close to the position of teachers like Roger Garrison (1974), Donald Murray (Fisher and Murray, 1973), and James Klein (1974),

who say nothing to the whole class after the first meeting or two, spending all of their time at scheduled class meetings talking to individual students one after the other while the other students write. They give no assignments and grade no papers, though they do require a certain quantity of writing and they do give a conventional course grade. Since you may not want to come quite that far with me, brace yourself now. I have a compelling, documented argument which I intend to pursue relentlessly. Actually, I have three substantial reservations about conferencing-only writing instruction, but I'll save those for later.

For me, any argument about which method of classroom writing instruction to use must be grounded in an understanding of discourse theory and the composing process—in short, in an adequate definition of *writing*. My favorite short definition is Donald Murray's (1976): Writing "is the process of using language to discover meaning in experience and communicate it." In elaborating his definition he points out, "... we have to appreciate the fact that writers, much of the time, don't know what they are going to write, or even possibly what they have written. Writers use language as a tool of exploration; writers use words to see beyond what they know. Most [composition] texts have not accepted this concept or dealt with its implications."

### The Composing Process

#### *Pre-Writing*

How does a writer go about "using language to discover meaning in experience and communicate it"? The process of producing a piece is widely described these days as a three-stage process: pre-writing, drafting, and revising. The pre-writing stage includes any activity before the first draft, all of our previous experience and knowledge in a sense, but more particularly the activities just prior to writing of remembering and exploring experience, observing, note-taking, interviewing, researching, reading, identifying the audience, choosing a persona, limiting the subject, and establishing a purpose for writing. Whether or not the writer is working from notes, the pre-writing stage always involves evaluating and selecting details of experience or information, making connections between details, and projecting a tentative pattern for presenting them.

*The pre-writing stage* involves far more than preparing an outline and choosing already pre-formed ideas to fill it in. Some writers make outlines, some do not. Very few make sentence outlines. I rarely outline before I begin writing. I did not outline this presentation. I wrote

down the two points I started with, re-read a half-dozen articles and some notes from a conference, let all that simmer for a day, and then started out. I wrote two pages, lost heart momentarily for some reason, and then started making notes to myself on a different topic, a much more general and comprehensive one than this one. Then I quit altogether in frustration, unhappy with both beginnings. A day later I went back to my original beginning and decided I liked it just fine and really did want to elaborate on my two points. From then on I occasionally did quite short-range planning by writing down very brief directions to myself about the pattern of each major section of the presentation. But I was unable to plan one section until I had finished the just-previous one, and I certainly could not have predicted in any detail at the outset the whole plan of the paper. It literally took shape as I wrote it.

In classical rhetoric the pre-writing stage I am discussing was subsumed under *invention*. As Murray has pointed out, it is slighted or ignored in composition texts. This neglect has led rhetoricians like Richard Young (1976) to call for a new rhetoric to replace what he calls current-traditional rhetoric, which he sees as superficial in many respects but flawed deeply in its neglect of invention or discovery. Some important recent research suggests that Young is correct. Several researchers (Rohman, 1965; Young and Koen, 1973; Odell, 1974) have demonstrated that careful attention to discovery procedures in the pre-writing stage can improve students' writing. Students have meditated, kept a journal, constructed analogies, and followed structured heuristic procedures in order to explore feelings and ideas and discover new insights.

One researcher who has taught me a great deal about discovery procedures is Lee Odell, my colleague at Buffalo. I can illustrate one kind of discovery procedure based on his work by sharing with you a set of pre-writing questions we have developed for a study of the effects of such questions on the quality of students' writing about characters in fiction.

Questions for writing about a *fictional character* or for writing about *someone you know*:

#### *Classifications*

1. How is the person like you?
2. What does the person say or do that reminds you of yourself?
3. How is the person like other people?

4. Who does the person remind you of?
5. How is the person like other fictional characters in the same story or other stories you remember?
6. What object or animal or event is the person like?

*Contrast*

7. How is the person different from you?
8. What does the person say or do that you would say or do differently?
9. How is the person different from other people?
10. How is the person different from other fictional characters in the same story or other stories you remember?
11. What object or animal or event is the person *not* like?

*Change* (in actions, appearance, status, emotions, relations with others, ideas, values and attitudes)

12. What did the person *used* to be like?
13. How does the person change during the story?
14. What can the person become?

*Physical Context:*

15. Where would you expect to find the person?
16. Where would you *not* expect to find the person?

The four categories—classification, contrast, change, and physical context—come from the tagmemic theory of linguist Kenneth Pike (Young, *et al.* 1970). After students read a story and before writing a description or analysis of the main character, they use the questions to explore the character in relation to themselves, other fictional characters, and people they know. They answer the questions, any they want in any order, by quickly jotting down notes to themselves. These notes are then the basis for the first draft. It can be a dramatically effective activity. In our initial tryouts of the questions we learned that for middle school or junior high school students we should introduce the categories of questions one at a time, using a different story for each, before putting them all together for one story. We suspect that it might also be helpful for the first use of the questions to be oral, with the teacher leading the discussion and jotting the notes on the board. Then students write their first paper from notes generated by the whole class.

For some writing teachers like John Schultz at Columbia College in Chicago the pre-writing stage in the composing process seems so important that work with it dominates the whole instructional program. Schultz and his colleagues (Schultz, 1976; Shiflett, 1973) have developed a systematic and delicately balanced sequence of pre-writing

activities led by a carefully trained director in what they call Story Workshop. The activities are nearly all oral: giving a word, which others then associate to, giving an image, telling an experience, hearing a story or part of a story read aloud, recalling and retelling segments of the story, and finally writing. The whole class of fifteen or so participates in all these warm-ups, with the director coaching, encouraging, drawing-out, much like the director of an actors' workshop. The collections of his students' writings which Schultz has published demonstrate the effectiveness of Story Workshop. He had helped a number of college and secondary school English departments adapt the workshop for their uses.

Let me pause here to summarize and to reconnect us to the argument I am developing. Writing is a complex process. We can conveniently talk about the process as a series of stages. The pre-writing stage of exploring, connecting, and planning is crucial to any piece of written discourse, even a short personal anecdote or a business letter. While there appear to be some common features of pre-writing activities and while whole-class instruction can teach students certain discovery procedures, pre-writing remains a highly individualistic process, even when students all have the same topic and use the same set of discovery procedures. For example, the notes students generate will be unique for each student; and the problems of organizing the notes, choosing a point of view toward the material, and conceiving a whole paper will be unique for each student. When students choose their own topics in your class or bring to you topics set by teachers in other classes, this uniqueness will be even more pronounced. Now, given these facts about pre-writing, how can the teacher be helpful to the student at this stage in the writing process? I would answer, "Only by talking to each student personally—or by training students to talk helpfully to each other." Some conversation is what's called for.

Well, you see what I'm up to. Let's proceed with other levels of the argument.

### *Drafting and Revising*

The stage of drafting is very much an unpredictable, discovery stage in composing. We almost never just fill in an outline when we transcribe the first draft. We actually discover much of what we want to say during the transcription. James Britton calls this "shaping at the point of utterance" (1976). Professional writers assume that the first draft is a working draft, a starting point, for further drafts and further discoveries. John Updike says, "Writing and re-writing are a constant

search for what one is saying." William Stafford says, "I don't see writing as a communication of something already discovered, as 'truths' already known. Rather, I see writing as a job of experiment. It's like any discovery job; you don't know what's going to happen until you try it." (Both quotes are from Murray, 1976.)

It may be that the most important thing students can learn from us about writing is that the first draft is only the starting point. We mainly see only first drafts. Students seem terribly reluctant to revise, and junior high school students may have difficulty with it for reasons I want to discuss later. The reluctance of high school and college students may reflect their lack of engagement with the writing task, but it may also reflect their lack of information about the composing process.

If we view the first draft as a starting point, then some of the wild, unorthodox procedures Peter Elbow (1973) recommends will seem attractive. Here's my version of his advice to high school and college students who have to write the usual short paper (500-700 words) of interpretation or argumentation: Set aside two to three hours of uninterrupted time. Don't think or plan. Just start writing and don't stop for twenty or thirty minutes. Don't worry about correct syntax, usage, or spelling. Then re-read this draft, looking for attractive ideas, interesting details. Look for a "center of gravity" in what you have written. Take some of the interesting ideas and develop each one further in another half-hour of non-stop writing. Now do some careful selecting and arranging, trying to cut and paste together a rough draft that moves pretty close to what you want to say. You will need to add statements of transition and emphasis and perhaps write an appropriate introduction and conclusion. Spend no more than a half hour or so. Now copy down or type the final draft, editing as you go. Notice that in Elbow's procedure both the ideas and the plan emerge *after writing is begun*.

Elbow talks about four stages in composing a piece: (1) start writing and keep writing, (2) disorientation and chaos, (3) emerging center of gravity, and (4) mopping up or editing. Here is his description of the composing process: "... think of writing as an organic, developmental process in which you start writing at the very beginning—before you know your meaning at all—and encourage your words gradually to change and evolve. Only at the end will you know what you want to say or the words you want to say it with. You should expect yourself to end up somewhere different from where you started. Meaning is not what you start out with but what you end up with."

I regard Elbow's book, *Writing Without Teachers*, as the single most important recent book on the composing process. I don't use

Elbow's procedures when I write, although I have begun using short free-writes to get over blocks in my writing. But his ideas are liberating for some students, and teachers everywhere could profit from reading and discussing his book.

To summarize: what a number of writers and researchers are telling us, and what our own experience as writers confirms, is that writing is a complex process in which writers discover what they know or feel and communicate it to readers. The process can be discussed as a series of stages, which actually overlap and even circle back on each other. Given these facts about what writing actually is, I conclude that writing instruction must be at least as concerned with this process as with the final product, that writers need help is to be fortunate enough to be in writing classes where a teacher talks to them often and arranges for them to talk to each other.

### The Writing Teacher's Task

For me, teaching writing means helping writers. The only text I need is the student's writing. The student writes and I try to help him or her improve one piece or get ready to start the next one. If students improve as writers during my course, it will be because I am a skillful reader and responder. This teaching task is different for me from teaching literature. It is certainly different from the algebra or history teacher's task. Here is Archibald MacLeish (1959) on this point:

... the whole situation in a writing course is a reverse of the usual academic pattern. Not only is there no subject, there is no content, either. Or, more precisely, the content is the work produced by the students. And the relation of the teacher to his students is thus the opposite of the relationship one would expect to find. Ordinarily it is the teacher who knows, the student who learns. Here it is the student who knows, or should, and the teacher who learns, or tries to. The student writes. The teacher reads. And the object of the teacher's reading is to learn if he can see how closely the knowing of the words approximates the knowing of the writer.

I would have said it much less elegantly, by arguing that, the subject for the teacher to study in the writing course is each individual student's development as a writer. The subject for the student is his own writing process. Actually, writing is not a subject in the traditional sense. It is an activity. It needs practicing. What the student needs for practicing is only his or her own mother-tongue, whatever the dialect.

This is still a rather novel view of writing instruction, but it is the only one that attracts my attention at the moment. Why? Because of what I know about the composing process.

Now that I've explored and even answered my first question—why should we see writing instruction largely as a matter of the teacher conferring with student writers—let me try to answer my second question—how do we manage that in our own classrooms right now. From here on in this presentation I am conjecturing about some possibilities, not making confident pronouncements. Writing this paper has actually been a part of my planning for teaching a college freshman writing course next term in the Learning Center at Buffalo. I've read everything I can find on conferencing and tutoring, and have just had the benefits of a very stimulating three-day conference on that topic at Buffalo. Planning to open a drop-in tutorial program in the Learning Center, we invited to Buffalo several people who have such programs in order for them to advise us about our own. We got some very good advice indeed from Mary Croft, Director of the Writing Laboratory at the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point, Robert Gundlach, Director of the Writing Place at Northwestern University, and Lester Fisher of the University of New Hampshire. I am indebted to all of them, and particularly to Robert Gundlach, who spent three days with us, for much of what I have to say in the remainder of the presentation.

### Learning and Teaching about the Composing Process

The teaching approach I am advocating here is one that puts us in touch with students and their writing at every stage in the process of writing. We confront the composing process daily. We remain concerned, of course, with actual pieces of writing and with all of the features we can discern in them; but we are equally concerned with all the steps in the process of putting a piece of writing together and with the possibilities for revising any piece we might be looking at. Consequently, both teachers and students need to learn about the composing process in general and about their own unique composing processes in particular.

A good place to start is for teachers themselves to examine the ways they write. I recommend that teachers in a school or college English department plan a meeting to exchange and discuss essays they have written on the topic "How I Write." A three to five page handwritten draft is appropriate. At a subsequent meeting I recommend that teachers exchange and discuss brief answers they have written out to

these four questions: (1) Which part of the writing process is usually easiest for you? (2) Which part of the process is usually most difficult for you? (3) Which part of the process is usually most enjoyable? and (4) Which part of the process is usually most unpleasant.

At a third meeting I recommend that you meet to discuss polished, typed answers to this set of questions: What makes writing easier, more manageable, for you? What gimmicks do you use—to get started, to keep going, to finish up? What are the working conditions you can recall in connection with your writing (when you were alone, writing a piece)? How do feelings affect your work on a writing project?

Why do these answers need to be polished and typed? To duplicate, assemble in a notebook, and make available in every writing class for students to read. Students are reassured to know that their teachers have some of the same writing problems they have.

These discussions among teachers are certain to be lively and revealing. They were for us in the Learning Center when Robert Gundlach tried this same set of questions on us. Each teacher becomes more aware of his or her way of writing and the group becomes thoughtful and better informed about the composing process, about what thwarts it and what enhances it.

As preparation for a fourth meeting I recommend that you ask students in several classes to write out answers to the four questions you responded to about the easy/difficult, pleasant/unpleasant aspects of composing. A reading and discussion of these answers will tell you a great deal about how students feel about writing and what they know about the composing process. Of course, a teacher could have a class group answer the questions and then use them as a basis for a discussion of composing. And eventually, students, like teachers, can contribute to the class notebook on how people at our school write.

Many teachers post in the classroom the writing students produce. I would also recommend that you ask students to prepare displays of all the steps on the way to a final draft, displays that would include in numbered chronological order all the notes, drafts, and revisions, with the final copy. Booklets could be made of particularly interesting displays and these could become the basis for class discussions of the writing process. These "histories of a draft" are also available in accounts of how professional writers go about their work.

Notice how all of these activities turn everyone's attention toward the actual process of composing. They illustrate that composing takes time, that it is a process extending over time and passing through

specific stages. By contrast, written products exist only in space. Attention only to products misleads students and prevents them from getting much of the help they really need.

### Conferencing and Tutoring

My main argument for conferencing and tutoring as a way of teaching writing is only too apparent: When we are able to talk to writers, we can be as helpful with the process as with the product. We guide the early stages of finding a topic, collecting information or exploring experience, and getting started. We respond to a draft or two or three. We are able to help with writing problems when they arise. We know the history of each piece and the pieces that proceeded it. With the student we shape the kind of product we really want, and at the same time we liberate students by enabling them to control the composing process themselves. (That is what's known as a basic skill of writing.) What students finally give us as their best efforts will be something they and we can be proud of.

Let me go ahead now to describe a writing class taught in a conferencing mode. Then I will conclude by discussing some of the advantages and disadvantages of conferencing.

Conferencing is one radical curriculum change that costs nothing. It requires no new facilities, equipment, or schedule changes. It works in a conventional classroom, conventionally equipped. Students need pencil and paper and a place to write. We need a place to sit and talk to students about their writing. Reference materials and self-help materials can be useful. In a college or secondary school writing course the class functions as a writing workshop each time it meets. Students come to class to write for the whole period. They may confer with other students, and they see me either when they need to or when we can schedule them on a rotating basis. In a comprehensive school English course the class might operate this way two or three days a week. All of the student's work—notes, drafts, final copies—accumulates in a folder.

Except for early writing assignments for diagnostic purposes, we give no whole-class writing assignments. Students write about what they know or what concerns them. As the course develops we can encourage individual students to explore new areas of their experience, to write for different purposes or audiences, and to try different modes or genres. Some students may need a great deal of encouragement to give up narration and description and try explanation.

The conferences themselves should be fast-paced, intense, usually non-directive, and limited to one or two problems. On the piece students bring to the conference they can write out at the top the problem they were trying to solve in the writing. At the bottom they can write out a description of how they solved it. After the conference the student might also be asked to write out a statement about the problems we discussed and the solutions we agreed to. But none of these procedures should be adhered to rigidly.

Conferences will vary in length. Some may need to be a half-hour long, others only fifteen seconds. For this to work in schools, most conferences will need to be under five minutes. We have been struggling with this problem in the English classes at Tonawanda Middle School near Buffalo (Cooper, *et al.* 1976). There just never seems to be enough time. Our best success has been to add to the time available for conferencing on writing workshop days the time available on days for free-reading, the staple feature of the reading program there (Cooper and Petrosky, 1976). We do it reluctantly because we believe teachers should read with younger students on free reading days. One clever way to speed the conferencing process is a procedure Walter Loban told me about last summer. When he was teaching English in schools, he would set himself up for conferencing by pulling two student desks up right beside his chair. On the board would be two lists of names. The student at the top of the left-side list would come to the left desk, the other top student to the right desk. Other students would continue to write. When Loban was finished talking to one student, the student on the way back to his or her desk would tap the next student on the list, while Loban turned immediately to the student in the other desk. When he finished with that student, another student was waiting, paper in hand. I outline this specific procedure in detail because it illustrates so well that if we persist, we can solve seemingly baffling problems. If what we know about composing convinces us that we should be teaching by conferencing, then we should lie awake nights until we figure out how to pull it off at your school.

Of course, the real solution is either small classes or extra conferencing periods for English teachers. We can fight for it, but we can't wait for it.

Besides speed, the other critical aspect of conferencing is saying the right thing. Elsewhere I've outlined quite specifically what I think we should attend to in a piece of writing (Cooper, 1975). Therefore, I

will talk only in a general way about what to say in a conference. The basic guidelines seem to be these:

1. Focus on only a very few problems at one time.
2. Try to get the student to identify the problem and to offer a solution.
3. Avoid doing the work yourself, making the changes, doing the re-writing.
4. Avoid concentrating on editorial problems until the very last stages of revision; try to look behind the transcription to the composition.
5. Be certain the student knows what to do next.

What we say first in a conference depends on so many things—how early it is in the course, whether the piece is the first of a possible series of drafts or the last effort in a series of revisions, what we already know about the student's writing problems, what we want him or her to work on next. There really are no algorithms to follow, only general heuristics to choose among. One quick decision we may need to make is whether the piece is perfunctory, involved, or impelled, to use James Britton's distinctions (1976). We probably shouldn't waste much effort over perfunctory writing. Encourage students to keep drafting on different topics until they hit on something worth developing. Probably most writing must be perfunctory, and we must be gentle with students who can't seem to move beyond it, but we must be alert not to miss the other kind.

All the usual concerns of writing instruction—organization, syntactic fluency, usage, punctuation, spelling—are handled functionally in the writing conferences. There are a number of research studies supporting an informal and functional approach to correcting problems of usage and mechanics (see Mellon, 1969, for a brief review). Students can be sent to reference books—*here* is the place for the composition handbook—or to self-help materials. I do not see how we can continue to justify spending time in the writing class teaching a grammar of the sentence or rules of correctness. Programmed self-help materials do it more efficiently than we can at the board, and a number of these are presently available from publishers. A student who just can't make those subjects and verbs agree can work independently through a program, and we can monitor his or her progress. And we can help regularly in the writing conference. Students whose syntax is immature or

clumsy can do sentence-combining practice under our guidance. All of these materials should be available in the classroom.

Most teachers who have been teaching by conferencing will claim that many writing problems clear up when students become involved or impelled in a topic of their own choosing. I don't know of any information about language or rhetoric students must have before they write. We can talk to them about their writing in everyday language. I am not aware of a single linguistic term or concept students must know to improve their writing. Students will learn in the conferences the special terms we may want to use. Though I think they should be used sparingly, we can use whole-class conferences on a single paper—with students following on a projected or dittoed copy—to introduce special problems or terms.

Grades are given only just before marking periods on papers or on a cluster of papers the student chooses as his or her best work.

Once the conferences are underway students will be learning from us what to say about the writing process and about pieces of writing. As soon as we can, we should arrange for them to talk about their writing to each other in pairs or small groups. We can form permanent small-group writing workshops where students meet during class to circulate their writing. Procedures for training students to work more effectively in small groups—to listen, focus on the task, draw out the talker, and so on—are now widely available (Sax and Hollander, 1972; Stanford and Stanford, 1969). At first we may need to be very directive about what kinds of responses we ask them to make. These group meetings—formal and informal—can be going on at the same time as our conferences.

The writing class I have just described is one more and more teachers are using. I have talked personally to several of them at various teaching levels, from Grade 4 to college. I have read several articles by teachers who work this way. Next spring I will be teaching a class like this for the first time. I'm trying to persuade you to try it with me, at least with one of your classes, just to see what happens.

Now let me shift abstraction levels in order to list the advantages and disadvantages I see in teaching by conferencing.

*Advantages:*

1. Students learn how to talk about writing and how to think about their own writing problems. Deanna Gutschow (1975) claims that the dialogue of the conference helps the student develop a critical inner voice.

2. When students learn what to say about writing, then they can talk to each other about it, taking some of the pressure off you.

3. We get to be involved in the entire process by which writing is produced, and consequently we can help students at all stages of the writing process.

4. When we are talking to students about their writing, it is much easier for us to respond to what is essential in writing, not just to relatively superficial transcription problems.

5. We can decide confidently how to use our energy. We can wait for the "impelled" draft.

6. Conferencing is *diagnostic*, for both the writing process and written discourse. Consequently, diagnosis is precise and sophisticated. We know just what students can do, and what we know takes you beyond spelling and comma uses into the depths of the composing process. We can answer the question, "Does this student spell in a consistently correct way?" as well as the question, "Does this student have any pre-writing strategies?"

7. Conferencing is *personalized*. We get to know our students and we can give them the help they need when they need it. We can give support to a very difficult activity. This personal contact removes the sting from evaluation. At least it is not distanced and anonymous.

#### *Reservations*

1. Even though proponents of conferencing-only writing instruction insist to a person that students should not be given writing assignments, I am uneasy about this stricture, especially for younger secondary students. From James Moffett (1968) and others (Britton, 1975) we have learned a great deal recently about how to sequence writing assignments in ways that almost certainly contribute to writing development. Moffett's sequences permit students to write from their experience in gradually more abstract ways and to write for increasingly distant audiences. In an article to appear soon in *Media and Methods* I have shown how dramatic monologue writing tasks may be sequenced to increase students' awareness of speaker and audience relations (Cooper, in press a). Therefore, I think I still might want to give some whole-class writing assignments now and then, but I can respond to them in the conference.

2. I am not certain whether the intensive, continuing revising that comes from conferencing-only teaching is appropriate for students in Grades 7 or 8, students who are not firmly into the stage Piaget calls formal operations. They may not be able to get enough distance from

their writing to see it as a separate object to be reformulated in various ways. It may be best for students at this stage to keep turning out new drafts, revising few if any of them.

3. At the same time that individual conferencing and tutoring are attracting our attention, some promising whole-class activities may be emerging; and I would not want to see them slighted. One activity is discovery procedures like those Lee Odell is developing. Another is synectics. Some value-clarifying activities can lead to good writing. Even though we teach mainly by conferencing, I think we could occasionally work with the whole class, especially for activities that help with the pre-writing stage in the writing process. Again, the response to the writing growing out of these activities would come from other students and from the teacher in conference.

### Conclusion

In this presentation I have developed the argument that when we teach writing, we should spend nearly all of our time conferring with individual writers. That seems to be what they need most—supportive response and help with their own problems in the particular piece they are working on. The writing process demands it. Discourse theory calls for it. Research on writing supports it. I don't see any way around it.

I'm encouraging you to try it with me next term in one of your classes. We need to experiment, especially to refine our understanding of what makes a good conference. A great deal of work needs to be done, and we can all contribute.

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# Developing Children's Language

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We know very little about the origin of speech but it is probably safe to assume that men found pleasure as well as use in it from the very beginning. Like other means to make life increasingly bearable in a practical way, it was adapted also to aesthetic satisfactions. (Schlauch, 1955, p. 227)

The importance of oral language as it relates to children's schooling and to their adult lives is no newcomer in the interests of educational researchers. As early as 1928, Paul Rankin (1928, pp. 235-238) found that adults spent 70 percent of their waking hours in verbal communication and that 45 percent of this time was spent in listening. According to Rankin, three times as much time was spent on listening as on reading.

Slightly more than twenty years later, Meriam Wilt's (1949) studies pointed out that children spent 57½ percent of their time in school in some kind of a listening situation. Yet, Wilt reported that only about 30 percent of the teachers in her study rated listening as the primary language activity for children in the classroom. More recent studies serve to merely verify these findings.

If we add to this, however, the enormous amount of time that our children spend in front of television sets in a listening-viewing situation, the importance of this aspect of oral language becomes mind boggling. Nancy Larrick (1975) recently reported that

Pre-schoolers throughout the nation watch television on an average of 54 hours a week. By the time a child enters first grade, he or she has seen 5,000 hours of television. By age 16,

the total is 15,000 hours. The average adult spends 10 full years of his life watching television.

Probably most significant in all of this is the fact that the research indicates that we are not very effective listeners.

Two of the most significant studies concerning expressive oral language and its importance in the curriculum are those of Ruth Strickland (1962) and Walter Loban (1963). Their research gave strong support for the contention that oral language development is the basis for achievement in other areas of learning. Their research and the work of other investigators led to some important understandings concerning oral language development and its relationship to achievement in reading.

Since then, other researchers have extended that knowledge by exploring specific areas which contribute to that relationship. For example, Dorothy Cohen (1966) studied the effect of a special literature program on the vocabulary and reading achievement of second grade children. In Cohen's study, children who had stories read aloud to them every day gained significantly more in vocabulary and reading achievement than did a control group.

Cullinan, Jaggar, and Strickland (1974) extended the work done by Cohen by examining more specifically which aspects of exposure to literature affected children's language development. In their study, both experimental and control groups had stories read aloud to them every day but only the experimental groups were involved in activities which stimulated active use of the language heard from reading the literature aloud. These children did role playing, creative dramatics, choral speaking, a parroting game, story telling, puppetry and engaged in group discussions of the books following the daily reading. The control group followed their daily story time with art activities, music, rhythmic activities or activities which did not involve active participation in the use of the language heard from the story reading. At the kindergarten level, children who used language grew in their control of language significantly more than the children who merely heard it.

The active use of language versus the passive hearing of language has been examined in relation to television. Research tells us that young children who watch a great deal of television have not demonstrated unusual growth in language control. Although they hear language extensively while viewing television, they are not actively involved in verbal interchange using the language.

So much for a very sketchy overview of the research evidence on the importance of oral language. If research support is what we want, we have it. Years and years of exemplary research have been invested in making the case for an oral language curriculum.

One cannot help but be curious, however, about the time lag between the significant research in this area and emergence of a widespread interest in the practical classroom applications of that research. Admittedly, there have been numerous articles and conference sessions devoted to the subject over the years and back in 1964, four major educational organizations—the Association for Childhood Education International, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the International Reading Association, and the National Council of Teachers of English collaborated to produce a small pamphlet entitled *Children and Oral Language* (1964). In this pamphlet, the importance of oral language is well stated. Nevertheless, it has only been during the past few years that the emphasis on practical classroom application has really taken hold. For the first time I sense that classroom teachers are, in large numbers, beginning to seek help in this area.

At this point perhaps we should pause and ask ourselves a few questions. Why has the widespread emphasis on the classroom application of research, which dates back as far as the nineteen twenties, taken so long? Is the classroom teacher, like the proverbial wife—always the last to know? Or, is there something or some things that have happened recently to make oral language development even more important to the curriculum than ever?

I believe the latter to be true. There have been a variety of developments, many related to classroom practices, during recent years that have contributed to the growth in interest in oral language. These developments have caused classroom teachers to feel the need for assistance.

First, let us take the theme of this conference, "Survival Through Language: Basics and Beyond." The conference brochure states that this, the 29th Language Communications Conference, "seeks to bring together and explore the different aspects of the language arts in a manner that will be useful to students, parents, classroom teachers, and educational researchers." More and more teachers are becoming interested in integrating the day, integrating the language arts (in which, of course, reading is included), or in simply seeking to improve the quality of specific language arts activities so that each child can benefit in as many different ways as possible. Such teaching causes teachers to look critically at each aspect of the language arts. Until recently, most teachers have focused their attention on reading and writing exclusively.

Thus, their need for help in planning strategies for total language development becomes apparent. I believe it was Will Rogers who said that a conference is an admission that you want someone to join you in your troubles. Certainly the need to truly integrate instruction in the language arts is a major concern among educators today.

A second possible cause for the greater interest in oral language development is the wider adoption of techniques usually found in a language experience approach to reading. The benefits of a language experience approach have been widely accepted among classroom teachers. This is an approach that depends upon extensive oral language interaction as a basic for reading and writing instruction. Teachers have discovered that the quality of the language interaction directly affects the quality of the writing and ultimately the range and quality of the reading materials produced by the children.

A third possibility is the fact that teachers today are more likely to be faced with a wide diversity of language speakers in a given classroom. Psycholinguistics tell us that these differences may not be due to immaturity or low intelligence, but that more often they may be accounted for in terms of regional and socio-ethnic differences. They have urged us to look upon these language variations or dialects as differences rather than deficits. In 1972 the National Council of Teachers of English published a booklet entitled "The Students' Right to Their Own Language" (1974). This document promotes respect for the language the child brings to school. The resolution which served as the stimulus for this publication begins in this way. We affirm the students' right to their own patterns and varieties of language-the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style.

In its entirety, this document is a rather powerful statement. Its implications place a heavy responsibility upon the classroom teacher. It helps to dispel the myth of a one dimensional language, a single correct dialect, a single correct way to talk.

Instead, teachers are told to learn as much as they can about the language of their students. The first requirement is to help the children express themselves in whatever language they bring to school. The attempt to gradually help children expand their language base toward a more standard variety should be secondary. The concept of expanding language rather than attempting to substitute one dialect for another allows such children to keep, with dignity, what is rightfully theirs as they embrace the broader language community.

Another very important aspect of language diversity is the growing number of non-English speaking children in our classrooms. In response to a recent Supreme Court decision many states have mandated bilingual-bicultural education for such children. The need to provide adequate language activities and to provide the diagnostic service often required has forced many teachers to seek help in devising more effective strategies for language development.

A fourth possible reason for the emerging interest in oral language is also closely related to language diversity. It concerns the greater emphasis we have placed upon pupil self-concept and its importance in everything we as teachers do throughout the day. Teachers of young children, particularly, are keenly aware of the relationship between language development and self-concept. The language of young children is intricately woven into their search to derive meaning from the environment. This relationship becomes even more intricate as children expand their search for meaning into reading and to general success in school.

A fifth consideration is the trend toward mainstreaming which places handicapped children in regular classes for all or for some portion of the day. Language problems are common among such children and require special attention. Classroom teachers frequently feel inadequately prepared to provide the kind of help these children need.

The final consideration relates back to what is commonly referred to as the "language bombardment" from which we all suffer. Throughout the course of one day we receive an immense amount of language to be processed. In addition, we all contribute to the enormous amount of language that is generated. Our shrinking world and the ever increasing technological advances demand that we produce effective users of language.

Clearly, these six reasons are not reasons that give oral language its inherent importance in the spectrum of the language arts. Those inherent reasons can easily be found in a review of the research. The reasons which I have just enumerated stem more from the implications of that research and relate more to the operational day to day framework of the classroom.

When we combine what we know about research and what we know about the tremendous demands placed upon classroom teachers today, a powerful argument for a well planned oral language curriculum begins to emerge. I emphasize the word "planned" since it has been my experience that oral language program is often more incidental than purposeful.

A beginning might be to simply state some overall goals for an oral language program. These need not be elaborate. A simple statement of goals helps to provide focus and direction to the planning of individual activities and it provides a referent for evaluation.

A second step might simply be to write down all of the various types of oral language experiences felt to be important at a particular level. These might include group discussion, reporting, explaining, debating, interviewing, storytelling and retelling, dramatization, puppetry, role playing, choral reading and speaking, conversing, describing, panel discussions, and a wide range of listening activities.

At the most rudimentary level, this list may be used as a means of recording the frequency with which children are engaged in the various activities. A single simple tally mark can be placed next to each title when it is appropriate. This approach helps us to accomplish the following:

- (1) It forces us to think of oral language development as an important, integral part of the curriculum that should not rely on a hit or miss effort.
- (2) It requires at least some reflection and projection of purpose.
- (3) It calls for some thought as to the range of possibilities that may be offered to children.
- (4) It offers information as to the scope and balance of the activities being offered.

The biggest problem with this very simple beginning is that it fails to account for the quality of the experiences being offered. By expanding our checklist to include the names of the children down one side of the page, and the activities across the top, a simple device can be developed that does monitor quality. Under each activity two or three related skills could be listed so that individual children may be evaluated in terms of specific outcomes. For example, under reporting a child might be evaluated as follows: organizes information well; includes essential facts; speaks with clarity and brevity; has a sense of audience; and so on.

Notice that the same skills and activities are often suitable for pre-kindergarten pupils through high school and beyond. For example, activities such as reporting, storytelling, and group discussion are valuable at any level; and, the performance objectives that we've listed above as examples under reporting are also valuable at any level.

As teachers plan, implement, and evaluate activities for oral language development there are a few things to remember:

- (1) Progress should be determined in terms of the individual learner. It would be both impossible and undesirable to set a single standard for all children.
- (2) Goals and objectives should be challenging but reasonable. A program that is too demanding may produce an effect that is opposite from the one desired.
- (3) The learner should be involved in the evaluation process. Children should know the kinds of things we are looking for when they give oral reports or engage in creative dramatics. This need not be reduced to a listing of specific skill objectives for pupil use but take the form of informal group discussions about what makes a good oral report or what makes a good storytelling session.
- (4) Group critiques that focus on individual performance should be avoided. Teacher-pupil conferences are better for this.
- (5) Criticism should be positive and be expressed in terms of the growth each child is making. [The child who needs the most help is often the one who is most sensitive about his or her language performance.]

We are all aware that children come to school knowing how to talk. And we know that they will continue to keep talking right through adulthood. Our responsibility, as teachers, is to help children become more than just talkers. It is our job to help them become effective users of their language. With caring and knowledge this can happen.

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# Writing and Critical Reading

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"The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things." "The question *is*," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master—that's all." . . . "They've a temper, some of them—particularly verbs, they're the proudest—adjectives you can do anything with, but not verbs—however, *I* can manage the whole lot of them!"

These lines from *Through the Looking-Glass* have long constituted a credo of English teachers, for they set forth both a goal of mother-tongue teaching and an attitude towards language. Too frequently of late have we encountered instances of words mastering people, not only in the realms of politics and advertising, but in the very jargon of our profession. Slogans like "performance objectives," "student-centered," "growth through English," and "back to the basics" have clouded our thinking about what it is we are doing. These words have mastered us to a certain extent and have clouded our minds as to what it is we are about in our job as teachers of the mother tongue. But the question needs to be asked, what is it we are about when we are learning or teaching our native language to people who are already speakers of that language. For great portions of human history, the native language was not necessarily part of the formal education of the young. Why should a group of professionals intervene in what might be seen as a natural aspect of growth?

These are not easy questions to answer. We can say something about what we have done as professionals, but can we assert that we have done what we ought not to have done or that we have left undone

what we ought to have done? If one of us goes into a restaurant or a taxicab or into some situation where a person asks us what we do, and we say, "I teach English," the first response is not an informed discussion of some recently read text or an author about whom the other person and ourselves might be knowledgeable, not about the rhetoric of a candidate for office or an advertiser. No, it is usually something like, "Gee, I better watch my language," or "I never was much good in English." Indeed we seem to have been inordinately successful in creating a public that is scared of language and at the same time senses that it is terribly important.

Our teaching has approached what I would call the games-lifemanship strategy to education. Some of you may remember Stephen Potter's volumes on gamesmanship and lifemanship—a series of instructions on how to win without actually cheating. One of the best ploys Potter found was that of saying to the tennis opponent just after he or she had made a perfect serve, "That was wonderful, was the ball at a 60° or 75° angle from your shoulder when you hit it?" The self-consciousness thus raised was such as to unnerve the opponent completely and render another ace impossible through the next two sets. I think we have done something close to this with our teaching of grammar—be it traditional or transformational—and with our teaching of literary criticism. I am not necessarily arguing against using reflexive and reflective questions, but I question their being substituted for practice of skills. I would like to return to this point later.

What is it we are about when we are learning our native tongue and teaching it to learners? I would suggest that we are concerned with enabling ourselves and others to become the master not the mastered. But what does it mean to be the master? Does it mean knowing the names of all of Shakespeare's plays, or all the grammatical terms? Does it mean scoring well on the SAT Verbal Test? Does it mean being able to write a literary-historical essay for a journal like *PMLA*? These seem at times somewhat rarified definitions of mastery. I would like to propose a set of goals at once more humble and more complex than the definitions of mastery that I have just listed.

### Producing and Receiving

Let me begin with two activities at which people should be proficient: producing and receiving meaningful linguistic utterances. People should be able to express themselves clearly and forcefully; they should be able to utter (or outer) their thoughts and feelings so that others

might understand them. They should also have the ability to apprehend the utterances of others. Utterances may be oral; they may be written; they may be presented through various media. In some instances it matters little what the medium might be; in others the differences between media might assume great importance. Traditionally English teachers have thought of these two activities as four: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. I would suggest that one think of them globally according to whether the individual is producing or receiving and then pay attention to the differences between media. To take an example: in most narratives there are the phenomena of character and the ways by which character is developed. Whether a child can apprehend character and characterization in a narrative appears to be different from whether or not the child can employ techniques of characterization in creating a narrative. At the same time, it may make less of a difference whether a child can apprehend character in a narrative that is heard as opposed to one that is seen in a book or a story. Any visualization of character, however, be it through illustration, acting, or the televising of a character, can modify one's understanding of character. The distinction between media here becomes important when there is added to the semantic freight of the words other directions to the individual as to how something is to be apprehended. As between listening and reading, however, there is a minimal distinction, unless the oral presentation is heavily dramatic. For teachers, the distinction between receiving and producing looms as more important than that between media. We are all well aware of the student who can recognize errors in other people's writing but commits the same errors in spontaneous writing. So it is with the concept of characterization: a student may recognize inconsistency of character in the story of another but may create several inconsistent characters in an original story. It seems to me that we cannot say that the student has mastered characterization unless we have ascertained that the mastery involves both reception and production. I make this point for several reasons, but one of the main ones concerns the issue of testing. Too often tests, particularly standardized tests, concentrate on reception and assume that because a student can perform the task in the receptive mode, the student is proficient in the productive mode as well. Such an assumption appears to me to be unwarranted, particularly since a great number of important decisions about students and about instructional programs are made on the basis of such tests—wrongly I think.

### Aspects of Language

What is it that these activities of receiving and producing deal with? What is it that people are to learn to behave clearly about? In the course of my research, I have become aware of four primary aspects of the mother tongue which combine to form utterances and which should be, severally and jointly, the objects of instruction. *The first of these is the experience itself*, the stuff about which communication is made. The experience is what a person is writing about, for instance, and the way in which the person feels about what is being written about. This experience has a content, a subject, and a series of emotional overtones that the writer or speaker wants to convey or that the listener or reader catches from the message. Some would call all of this content, some experience; I prefer the latter term because it accounts for the differences between readers and listeners as well as that between writers dealing with the same subject. Two writers might be describing the same phenomenon, but they perceive it and feel about it slightly differently. These differences form different experiences for the writers or for the readers. No two readers read the same text in precisely the same way, just as no two people perceive the same object in precisely the same way. There are great areas of similarity, but there are fine distinctions between even the most similar of readers. Unavoidably people filter other experiences, whether virtual or vicarious, through the set of experiences that they have had. It is for this reason that no two critics, however well trained, will come up with the same reading of a text. If this is so, then certainly no two readers can be expected to perceive the experience of a text in exactly the same way.

*Besides the experience, there exist the medium through which the experience is conveyed, the structure of the experience, and the voice of the individual presenting the experience.* These three form the technical aspects of our language. The medium is language, words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs as well as rhetorical devices such as metaphor, symbol, and irony. Any linguistic utterance uses words, which have denotative and connotative meanings—some of these shared by all who use the language, others peculiar to particular readers and writers, speakers, or listeners. Certainly a teacher sensitive to language is aware of the individual differences in nuance of meaning within a class. Particular words have particular associations for particular people. Some of these are shared by a culture at a particular time or in a particular place—such sharings becoming dialectical variants. One of my favorite

examples of this variation occurs in the reading of Shakespeare's lines from *Cymbeline*:

Golden lads and girls all must,  
As chimney-sweepers come to dust.

I have a set of private associations with these lines, because they are quoted in Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, the play version of which I was heavily involved in as a college undergraduate. So I see in them a reference to Stalin's Russia and the purges. I also see the lines as referring to the beautiful people of the court, a set of neo-Greek beautiful people being associated with characters from a Dickens novel, and both coming to the grave. This second perception is, I suspect, shared, with minor variations, by a great number of readers today. I happened once to talk to a Shakespeare scholar who said, "Do you know, in seventeenth-century England dandelions were referred to as golden lads when they were yellow and as chimney-sweepers when they were in their seed stage?" From this comment, then, it would seem that these lines had a much more prosaic meaning at the time in which they were written than they do now. Such is an example of a dialectical difference over time. There are many over space, or across dialect boundaries.

Besides these aspects of meaning, there are the more complex ones: connotation, imagery, metaphor, and symbol. Within a culture, words produce emotional reactions and sense impressions common to a group. When words are put together to explain words or concepts as "the ship plowed the seas," meaning and connotation combine to help the writer or the reader perceive a new set of meanings and have a new set of reactions and impressions.

Metaphor is one of the primary linguistic devices in both expression and communication. Proceeding from the analogizing instinct of people, the urge to understand phenomena by relating them to other phenomena already known, metaphor is an important tool in helping people comprehend the world around them and communicate their comprehension to others. The metaphoric basis of language has been explored by scholars in a number of disciplines, as has the extension of metaphor into allegory, myth, and the process of interpretation. Of all the rhetorical devices, it is the one most used in all forms of discourse, from being "safe at home" in baseball to the elaborate discussion of the parallels between Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage* and the *New Testament*. In a sense this latter discussion is a complex prolongation of

the activity that a young child engages in when using the word "doggie" to describe any newly perceived four-legged animal. Whether in large or in small, the medium of language is employed as a tool of apprehension and communication of both what is perceived and what is felt about that perception.

### Structure and Organization

In addition to language used as a medium, there is in most discourse a structure or organization. This structure appears in both small and large units of discourse—sentences, paragraphs, whole essays, stories, novels, or plays. Structure is usually based on a series of decisions about juxtaposition, what should be placed next to what; repetition, what should be repeated or reinforced; and configuration, how the whole thing should appear. In many cases structure is fairly well limited by a set of constraints. A recipe should follow a temporal order fairly closely; an index should follow an alphabetical order. In other cases, there is a certain freedom and choice as to structure: what rhyme scheme to use, what scene to put next to what scene, in a play, whether to have the main point at the beginning or end of a paragraph, where to locate the modifiers in a sentence. Decisions about structure are made by the writer or speaker, who considers such rhetorical matters as unity, coherence, and emphasis. The reader or listener tends to perceive such aspects of structure as stand out; more often than not the reader or listener is barely aware of them, particularly of many of the more subtle kinds of repetition or juxtaposition—of vowel sounds in a poem for example, or of words or phrases in a novel.

Finally, most pieces of writing or sections of discourse are modulated by what might be called a voice, a term used to comprehend such matters as point-of-view, attitude, and tone. James Moffett has shown clearly the continuum of point-of-view in writing from the stream of consciousness monologue to the totally dispassionate scientific presentation. The distinguishing points along this continuum concern the degree to which the writer or speaker asserts a personality, or presents him or herself to the audience. Point-of-view is not all there is to voice, however; the writer's or speaker's attitude towards the subject of the discourse is also an aspect of voice as is the tone or emotional freighting of the presentation.

To recapitulate, experience, language, structure, and voice are the four distinguishing features of discourse both as it is produced and as it is perceived. The producer must make decisions in each of those four

features in order to produce a piece of connected discourse. These decisions often stem from a choice among modes of discourse, whether descriptive, narrative, argumentative, expository, or some other mode, and a choice about the producer's relationship to receivers or audience. The decisions involve choices about audience, approach, and style.

### Operations

A receiver must also perform certain operations, which fall into three major categories: perceptive, inferential, and evaluative. Perceptual operations involve the analysis and classification of the four features separately and in combination. The perceiver asks such questions as "What kind of language is being used?" "How is the selection structured?" "What is the producer's point of view?" "What is the nature of the total experience?" These questions might be intrinsic, looking at the selection as an entity in itself; or extrinsic, looking at the selection in relation to other examples of discourse. In the former case, the perceiver is asking how the discourse is put together; in the latter how the discourse can be classified as an individual instance of a large body of discourses. The distinction is between a kind of comprehension that determines the very fabric of the discourse and that which locates the discourse in the world, between saying that a poem has fourteen lines with a particular kind of rhyme scheme and saying that the poem is a Shakespearean sonnet. The latter kind of statement presupposes a broad experience with other examples of discourse; the former a knowledge of some of the terminology of analysis.

Inferential operations may be said to include both first-order and higher-order inferences. Given a description of a boy's physical characteristics a first-order inference might be that the boy is sick. We can call this a generalization rather than an inference if we prefer. With more information, we might infer further that the sickness is psychosomatic or is a manifestation of some personality trait. In a literary text, we might say that the sickness is symbolic of some other aspect of the boy. All of these would be higher-order inferences, meaning that they involve going beyond the level of generalization to such matters as causation, relationship, or the like.

Evaluative operations involve judgments about the growth of the discourse or its parts of the person or persons presenting the discourse. Some evaluations are quite personal—"I like it." Many of them claim a greater objectivity—"It is well-made," "It is morally appropriate," "It is effective in arousing the emotions." The first kind of judgment I have

elsewhere called a statement of personal engagement or involvement. In a sense it does speak to the personal interaction between the perceiver and perceived, the reader and the text, the audience and the speech or presentation; at the same time it is a statement of value, and in many instances may be a way of expressing what in other cases would be a more dispassionate evaluation. The evaluative operations may also be the ones that assert the propagandistic nature of a text or a part of it.

In the past description of operations and aspects, I have been somewhat abstract; let me give an example, which will, I think, elucidate the set of generalizations I have set forth. To take as an example a passage of writing from a recent *National Geographic* (Grove, 1976, p. 175):

Astride a gleaming motorcycle, Felipe Brillembourg roared into a dawn filled with the hum and smog of Caracas traffic. Ahead lay a busy day: four hours of teaching engineering at Simon Bolivar University; a planning session for a graduate program; a meeting with an industrial group to form a new chemical company; consultation with his stockbroker.

At 25, the sixth-generation descendant of Dutch immigrants to Venezuela finds it easy to become involved in matters of national development, for his is a nation thirsting for technical skills. "There is terrific challenge for young people here," he had told me.

At the same time that Felipe was weaving his way through the bumper-to-bumper snarl of the *autopista*, a Yanomamo Indian was padding along a forest path near the headwaters of the Orinoco River. A tapir had been sighted near the village of Hasubowa-teri, and its 300-pound bulk would feed many families.

The Indian's hand gripped a palm-wood bow and three seven-foot arrows made of cane, and his eyes scanned the dense foliage as he ran along the path. Raiders from another village were expected, and ambush is the accepted method of warfare among these forest people. The Yanomamo tongue has no words for "national development."

The experience of the passage concerns the activities of two citizens of Venezuela. The language of the passage includes the use of adjectives of light in describing the city man, and adjectives of darkness describing the Indian. There are a few metaphors, most of which are of the sort that would not be considered novel ("dawn filled," "nation thirsting,"

"weaving . . . snarl"). The structure of the passage involves the juxtaposition of the two scenes, each of which requires two paragraphs, and the repetition of the actions of movement and the phrase, "national development." The voice of the writer appears to be mainly that of the third-person narrator, who intrudes very little into the text. At this point, it is hard to determine the writer's attitude.

All of this we have been observing at the analytical level, and we could classify the passage as being a typical travel piece. Inferentially, we might note that there is a contrast between two ways of life, the modern and the primitive, and at a second level we might say that although there are changes in circumstances, both are hunters. As evaluators, we might say whether we like the passage or not (I do) and whether we think it is good (it seems to me an effective although obvious introduction to an article on an emerging nation).

The point of the exercise I have just performed is that I could perform this set of operations on these facets of almost any piece of discourse, whether written or oral, whether fictional or factual. I would argue that to be able to do this is to exhibit a certain kind of mastery over language. I would argue that to produce these four paragraphs knowing what I was doing would also be a token of mastery over language. Words seem to be doing what the author wants. I as a reader seem to be aware of what the words are doing. Whether I am the writer or the reader, I seem to be the master in Humpty Dumpty's terms.

### Educational Implications

If these are the kinds of mastery that can and might be taught, what of the implications for the teacher and the curriculum in English? First of all, I would argue that most research would indicate that these matters are not taught. The recent international studies in reading and literature indicate that as far as receiving is concerned, students do well on such matters depending on their home background. If one looks at the items testing such matters in light of the curriculum, one finds that careful reading—or reading comprehension, or critical reading—are not explicit objects of the curriculum, particularly in grades 3-9, so that students who do well do so not because of school, but because of other factors like home background. When things are taught in schools, schools make a difference. I would also suspect, from the current interest in grammar and in matters of sentence structure, that the writer's various options for manipulation are also not taught in these crucial years, so that writing achievement as measured by judgments of rhetori-

cal effectiveness would probably also be attributable to home background, rather than to schools. If these matters are not taught, school effects on their learning are immaterial.

In saying what I have just said, I am not casting any blame; the situation seems to be worldwide; it is simply a fact that reading comprehension and writing proficiency are often measured but seldom taught. They are not easy to teach; they are neither clear-cut like spelling nor pleasantly airy like humanities. But they can be taught.

In teaching these aspects of the mother tongue and their mastery, one can approach them both through the kinds of activities one would ask the students to engage in and through the aspects of discourse. In the past year, I have been teaching seventh-grade English, and the approach we have been taking is through the aspects of discourse. We have subdivided them into certain discrete units: in language, classification and definition, denotation and connotation, and metaphor; in structure, narrative organization of space and time and paragraph organization; in voice physical point-of-view and personal point-of-view. In each unit, we have asked students to perceive, interpret, and evaluate in their reading and to explore various manipulations of these aspects of discourse in writing and dramatic presentation. In classification and definition, for example, we have included exercises in horizontal and vertical classification, games like Twenty Questions, assignments like categorizing teachers or television programs, defining oneself, and examining poems of definition.

We have chosen to approach the curriculum through aspects of discourse because it seemed to us that this approach was more amenable to notions of mastery learning than was one that was directed at activities or at a more global view of writing or critical reading. Not that I am totally enamored of mastery learning in all of its aspects, but I believe that it makes sense to approach these parts of the curriculum from a molecular point of view. I would draw the analogy of teaching a sport: one does not do so by continually having the learners play games; they just learn certain aspects of the sport—what are called the fundamentals—and then put them together. What we have done is to take a somewhat broader view of the fundamentals than has been taken in the past. During the course of instruction, the students do have a chance to put the pieces together—in their reading of certain longer works of literature, in their performance of a play, but the focus of instruction is on the aspects or sub-aspects to which I have referred. In making individual assignments, particularly in writing, we are careful to treat each assignment as a self-contained unit: if one is working on

paragraphs, the assignments are to write paragraphs that are self-contained units, that have meaning as discourse, but that are not overly long.

The purpose of this curriculum development is not simply to create new units, but to examine the problem of what difficulties students encounter in learning to master the chosen aspects of discourse. Many students are typed as having learning difficulties, but how often have we thought of particular aspects of content as being difficult learnings? There may be certain topics or parts of topics that students generally find difficult: in our studies the seventh graders have had more trouble with time than with space in reading narratives, they have had more trouble with connotation than with denotation, more trouble with producing consistent points-of-view than with identifying them, more trouble with dividing large categories into sub-classes than with placing individuals into large classes, to name but a few examples. Why should these difficult learnings exist? In some cases they seem to be related to a lack of experience on the part of the children, in others to problems with dealing with abstraction, in still others with a lack of certain background skills or knowledge. It may be, we seem to be finding, that junior high school children are simply not ready to deal with connotation or with certain kinds of abstraction. There are other cases where the children's frame of reference is not appropriate to the learning: the notion of objectivity seems not to match the way they perceive phenomena so that writing about something in the third-person is almost contrary to the way in which they see the world. All of these matters are still conjectural at this point; nonetheless we are gathering information.

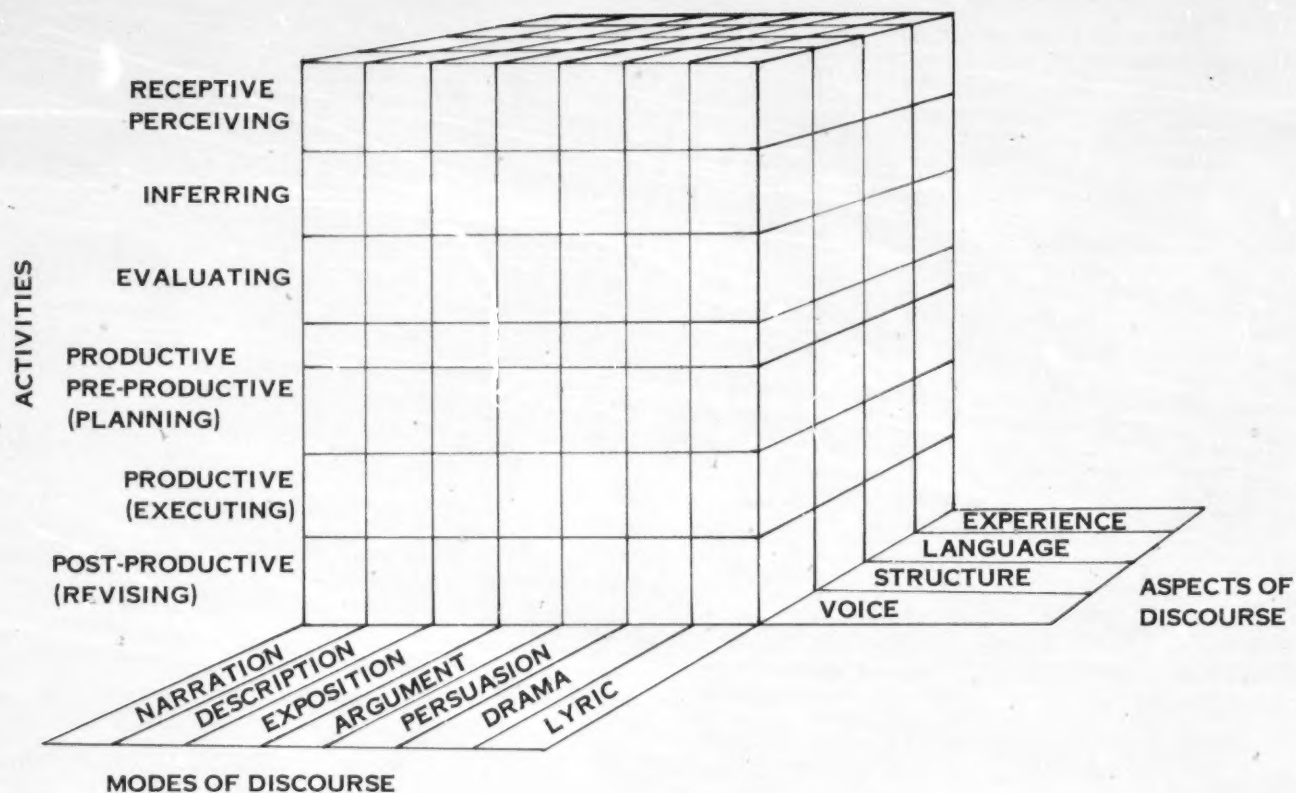
The information we are gathering will have two important uses, I think. The first is that it might help some teachers understand why their students are having problems with what is being taught and might suggest some strategies for coping with these problems. The information will also better enable us to say what criteria of mastery of a topic might be expected of children at a given age or stage of learning. Too often the criteria of mastery are set by experts or are seen to be what adults perform. Should a student of fourteen write like an adult or should that student write like a good fourteen-year old? We have seen this problem emerge from the work of Kellogg Hunt, who showed certain aspects of the syntax of writers at different age levels. From that research have come numerous attempts to have younger children write like older children or like adults. Why shouldn't a thirteen-year old be allowed to be a thirteen-year old? Granted there is, as Hunt has

shown, a continuum, we would expect students to make progress along that continuum, but there is no reason for students to span the continuum in six-weeks or even a year. So it is in critical reading when we expect eighth-graders to become archetypal critics. It may be that they are just barely at the stage where they can make first-order inferences. What we have done is to select certain domains for research, instruction, and measurement and have attempted to say what the level of mastery of a given domain might be reasonable at a particular age-level. It seems to me that this is the direction in which evaluation should go, and the direction in which curriculum and instruction should go.

I agree with Humpty Dumpty that the question is who is to be master. I would also say that we have to define what mastery is. I think that I have approached a segment of that question from a theoretical point of view. The next question is what are the stages toward mastery, and what are the constraints upon a child's attaining mastery. Those are the questions for the future, and the answers to those questions might well help us enhance the growth of our youth in their use of their mother tongue.

#### Resources

- Grove, Noel. "Venezuela's Crisis of Wealth," *National Geographic* 150, August, 1976, p. 175.



# Achievement of Excellence Beyond the Basics

DELORES MINOR  
Detroit Public Schools

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When the first atom bomb was exploded at the end of World War II, according to Margaret Mead, some people realized that all humanity was entering a new age. We are living in that age now at the best of times and the worst of times. Within this ambiguous social reality, we are trying to teach students in increasing court-ordered integrated schools often involving busing while at the same time educating students to respect the human rights of others; we are trying to respond to students' insistence for "relevant" educational programs while at the same time being aware of alienation of young people, many of whom still empathize with Holden Caulfield of J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* and the lost children on the island of William Goldman's *Lord of the Flies*. We live and work, it seems, in a period of wonderment asking like Sandberg:

Where to? what next?  
Where to? what next?

It is evident that numerous problems beset education today with demands emanating from various disparate sectors, such as parents, students, media, boards of education, polls, federal and state governments, courts, research, surveys. In each case, we are told what we are not doing and what should be done. Since education seems to be the natural province of individuals, organizations and others, we are fre-

quently placed in the position of reacting rather than acting. We tend to react more on the basis of crises as opposed to creative thinking to prevent crises on both short and long range levels. Critics in abundance are condemning, examining education in the United States to prove the need for educational reform.

In keeping with the financial crises of many school systems depending more and more on federal and state categorical assistance to supplement state aid monies and passage of property tax, recent studies show an educational reactionary movement toward a disillusionment with current financing of public education and its concomitant quality of educational services as well.

Our critics generally focus on headline-making aspects like violence in and around schools, anarchy, illiteracy, permissiveness, apathy of staff, students and parents, poor curriculum, deteriorating discipline, low achievement scores, and progressive educational programs. Confidence in educators and in public education is eroding as quickly as finances and enrollments are declining. What each of us is seeking is the ideal of excellence in education to develop better literate and functional minds.

Some current critics would have us go "back to the basics" as the solution to cure educational ills. Whereas educators at one point were marshalled and pressured into making school all things to all people, now we are being pressured through rising costs of operating schools and insistence on outcome on the other hand to return to the basics; that is, teaching the fundamentals of reading, writing, and arithmetic. I do not object to these elements of the traditional curriculum to achieve the ideal of excellence and, thereby, improve education. The "back to the basics" movement, however, seems to be a matter of the semantic difference between the what and the how of teaching.

I have no objection, I should add, as long as the teaching and learning *do not stop there*. If students learn to diagram a sentence, memorize a set of rules for grammar, learn a mathematical formula, the result is that possibly some mechanical, rote process has been achieved in order for them to get a grade and score well on a standardized test. I cannot, however, determine how they will then function as responsible human beings in society. Teaching really is after all a combination of the artistry between science and humanism of instruction.

Pressure is now being applied to the young to achieve academic standards in many cases at the expense of intellectual and aesthetic values. In learning to read and write well, for example, emphasis should be on learning how to use words accurately in the full nuances of their

meaning, to care about the words themselves, and to feel the clean simplicity of a well-written, cohesive sentence. For this reason, the teaching of reading and writing must be harmonious with the sound of words. Students learn how to read and write when they learn how to *enjoy* reading and writing. Once they have learned this skill, they can then be taught to practice the art of writing until they have achieved a degree of mastery and excellence. This achievement is one of emotional development, of motivation, challenge, and purpose. Without such development, the basics may well remain formalities only, not something to understand to use in a personal way.

The prevailing pattern of instruction has emphasized drill in rules and diligence in the performance of ritual exercises at the expense of understanding content. In many cases, this meaningless monotony of drills destroys in all but a few any desire for the creative use of the basics. No amount of mechanical exercise in word definition, spelling, or grammar can take the place of regular and frequent experiences of putting words on paper, of caressing them, of having a love affair with them to appreciate their significance and subtle nuances.

The processes of comprehension, expression, and measurement can be made real, meaningful, and pleasurable to students regardless of their ability. We have available the means of enabling students through reading to develop some familiarity with the important conceptions of our culture, and through practice in writing and speaking the ability to express themselves clearly.

The content of instruction in the basics of reading, writing, and speaking can be adjusted to the varying levels of student ability. The untalented, for example, will command a smaller vocabulary; they will absorb a narrower range of meanings from literature; they will apprehend concrete myths, tall tales, and metaphors more readily than abstract symbols or logical connections. Whatever students learn, however, will be of immense use in establishing a means of communication with the rest of society in which they live.

A curriculum based simply on "back to the basics" indicates to me that someone, somewhere decides what should be taught, not necessarily what is learned. What is taught cannot be equated with what is learned, retained, and used effectively. We should also recognize that if students *want* to learn something, they do so mainly because the learning has some significance for them. It is human nature, after all, that when we *want* to learn we can learn without teachers and sometimes despite them.

If we accept this premise, we begin to realize that not everything that *ought* to be learned *can* or *should* be taught by educators. The major point is that as educators we should teach the ability to communicate and to be communicated with, to teach techniques relative to modern science and technology, and to teach concepts each of which gives students the accoutrements for future learning, understanding, and coping in the world of today as well as the world of tomorrow.

Without adequate understanding of various fields of knowledge, students cannot function as iterate human beings. They are not even equipped, given the strictures of the basics alone to know what pertinent questions to ask to challenge their thinking and to entice them into more intensive and extensive inquiry. Students must be able to recognize when questions of value are posed. My concern, then, is going beyond the basics to include the need for humanism in education. To discard or deemphasize humanistic education is to destroy or cripple the right of each individual to *be* and to *become* and in the process to relegate our society to a state of nonentity.

Problems in the world of human affairs cause us to make decisions based on all that we know and wish that we knew. A definite value exists in a broad systematic study of humanistic education to help students develop competence in dealing with problems and issues on a human scale. The affective level of comprehension is the personal one. Students should become aware of different modes of thought and various types of language usage involved in dealing with problematic situations. In so doing, they can also learn to make clear distinctions between the cognitive and the affective domains and then interrelate them as needed in our world-wide community. They can develop the art of becoming linguistically flexible in a world which demands flexibility. There are times, after all, when the use of the language of the street, for example, is sometimes essential for survival and for social acceptance.

Students have to understand that excellence in learning involves the creative function of translating knowledge into wisdom. It seems to me that knowledge is translated into wisdom when what is true about the nature of things is refashioned to the human scale and introduced to human understanding, to human need and to human aspiration. When this transmitting has been completed, the cognitive and the affective are united into *one* universe of discourse.

Excellence in education embraces many kinds of achievement whether in art, music, craftsmanship, human relations, technical work, sciences, or management. Excellence is primarily a combining of ability,

motivation, and character. It is possible to cultivate the ideal of excellence in students going beyond the concept of "back to the basics."

Education was once aimed for the wealthy and/or academically oriented person. That thrust is no longer true. We should know by now that narrowly educated persons in basics alone do not necessarily make good executives, good teachers, good lawyers, *ad infinitum* unless they are also sensitive to themselves as persons first and then to others.

If we accept and act on the principle of "back to the basics" only to achieve excellence, we as educators today are not far behind the Babbitts of yesteryear. As educators, we have a professional commitment to excellence based on humanistic rights of individual students. We cannot abrogate that responsibility in spite of internal and/or external pressures. We are not in the business of educating students who demonstrate excellence only in basic skills and then become a statistic in criminality, a wanton in immorality, a lost soul in the decadence of drugs and alcohol.

As educators seeking excellence for all students, we must imbue students with ideas and ideals of excellence no matter what the curriculum; we cannot be limited in the emphasis on curriculum in spite of federal, state, or local community pressures. We live and work in a time of great expectations; yet we are tormented by the tensions of national and world problems on a daily basis. It is for that reason that we should educate students to meet unknown needs, not only needs already identified.

As educators, we must extend students' boundaries of knowledge by encouraging them to question everything including truths which are considered sacred and timeless. We must not only impart knowledge, but open up minds revealing possibilities that they may not have suspected; we must confirm in them a faith in their own sensibilities and intelligence; on the other hand we must not suffer their foolishness or indulge their errors; we must reveal to them the double truth that though they can often be wrong they have, like us, the right to be wrong and if they are willing to live a life of intellectual risk, they may someday *know* more, *see* further, and *feel* more acutely than any of their elders, including their teachers. Students must understand that human thought is potentially unlimited.

With these credos in mind, a teacher confronts students and engages with them in the hope that they will someday go beyond the limitations of vision built into them by the limitations of their training and time, that they will even escape the trap of believing that their new vision is a final one to be imposed forever after on the generations who

succeed them. In the final analysis, the teacher must be free in order to teach students to be free knowing that freedom, the right to express what they believe in without hindrance, cannot be acquired by rote or by law. In presenting this ideal, the teacher becomes a model of the free person inculcating the habit of freedom to be, to become, to exist as thoughts soar to unfathomable heights beyond expected vision. In this respect students begin to realize that "nothing happens unless first a dream."

At least one human being, multiplied by thousands, can say and believe and feel even with the basics fully mastered, "I can"; "I will"; "I AM!"